



In Response to Questions from House Finance

What are the School Readiness Program and Early Childhood Education Program?

- As EOEL prepared for implementation of early learning, the Attorney General identified a significant barrier: Article X, Section 1, of the Hawaii State Constitution restricts the use of public funds for the support or benefit of private educational institutions.
- The Attorney General has advised a ConAm because the program design includes:
 - Delivery of early learning services through partnerships with private programs. They have been the mainstay providers for our families and indicate available capacity.
 - Incorporation of explicit educational goals and standards. This will result in the higher-quality services that produce the child outcomes needed to prepare them for success in kindergarten given the new common core standards.
- Given the need for a ConAm, two early learning bills in addition to the ConAm bill are necessary:
 - **School Readiness Program** (SB1093) – Phase 1.
 - Addresses the change in kindergarten entry age and the effect of having 5,100 children ineligible for kindergarten in July 2014.
 - A school readiness program for children in the year before kindergarten.
 - Establishes a baseline of quality through program and contractual requirements; providers can only be measured and held accountable for their ability to effectively contribute to, and support families in contributing to, children's development and readiness for school.
 - **Early Childhood Education Program** (SB1095) – Phase 2.
 - Private providers will continue to provide services.
 - Providers will be held accountable for higher standards such as those for curriculum, teacher quality, assessment, and educational outcomes in the year before kindergarten.

Who will be served?

- 5,100 children will be ineligible for kindergarten due to the 2014 change in kindergarten entry age. Based on surveys and estimates, other programs such as Head Start and Kamehameha Schools could serve 1,600 of these children. The School Readiness Program would serve the remaining 3,500 children.
- Eligibility: Late-born four-year-old children.

- Priorities:
 1. Low-income children. No family copayment.
 2. Remaining funds would be used for low-moderate and moderate income children.
Family copayment based on a sliding fee scale.

Will you be providing transportation for participating children?

No – we did not include transportation in our funding request because it would exponentially increase costs. Our priority has been to ensure that direct services are available.

How is the School Readiness Program different from Preschool Open Doors?

Contract terms will require providers to adhere to standards higher than DHS child care licensing requirements (minimum health and safety).

Can faith-based providers participate in the program?

We want to work with faith-based providers to bring them into the State's early learning system as much as possible. However, participating faith-based providers must adhere to guidelines set out in their contracts. The ConAm does not change issues surrounding the federal-state mandate of separation of church and state.